

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

A detailed listing of all claims that are, or were, in the present application, irrespective of whether the claim(s) remains under examination in the application are presented below. The claims are presented in ascending order and each includes one status identifier. Deleted matter is shown by strikethrough for six or more characters and double brackets for five or less characters; added matter is shown by underlining.

1. (Currently Amended) A modular stage prop system comprising:
 - a first stage prop that comprises a first stepping surface and a plurality of first side surfaces extending from the first stepping surface and having a proximal end adjacent to the first stepping surface and a distal end opposite the first stepping surface, wherein the first stepping surface and the plurality of first side surfaces define a first partial enclosure in which an object may be stored, and wherein at least one of ~~the first stepping surface~~ and the plurality of first side surfaces has a ~~male connector portion~~ first locking member; and
 - a second stage prop that comprises a second stepping surface and a plurality of second side surfaces extending from the second stepping surface and having a proximal end adjacent to the second stepping surface and a distal end opposite the second stepping surface, wherein the second stepping surface and the plurality of second side surfaces define a second partial enclosure in which an object may be stored, wherein at least one of ~~the second stepping surface~~ and the plurality of second side surfaces has a ~~female connector portion~~ second locking

member, and wherein the male connector portion and the female connector portion first and second locking members are located at the same distances from the distal ends of the first and second side surfaces, respectively, such that when the first and second side surfaces are proximate each other, the first locking member is [[are]] capable of engaging the second locking member sideways each other thereby [[for]] retaining the first stage prop and the second stage prop in a stationary relationship with respect to each other.

2. (Currently Amended) The modular stage prop system of claim 1 A modular stage prop system comprising: a first stage prop that comprises a first stepping surface and a plurality of first side surfaces extending from the first stepping surface, wherein the first stepping surface and the plurality of first side surfaces define a first partial enclosure in which an object may be stored, and wherein at least one of the first stepping surface and the plurality of first side surfaces has a male connector portion; and a second stage prop that comprises a second stepping surface and a plurality of second side surfaces extending from the second stepping surface, wherein the second stepping surface and the plurality of second side surfaces define a second partial enclosure in which an object may be stored, wherein at least one of the second stepping surface and the plurality of second side surfaces has a female connector portion, and wherein the male connector portion and the female connector portion are capable of engaging each other for retaining the first stage prop and the second stage prop in a stationary relationship with respect to each other, and[[,]] wherein the male connector portion is movable between an extended position

and a retracted position, and wherein the male connector portion is biased to the retracted position.

3. (Original) The modular stage prop system of claim 2, wherein the first stepping surface and the plurality of first side surfaces each have an inner wall and an outer wall that are oriented in a spaced-apart configuration, and wherein the male connector portion is biased substantially between the inner wall and the outer wall when the male connector portion is in the retracted position.

4. (Currently Amended) The modular stage prop system of claim 1, wherein the ~~male connector portion~~ first locking member has a threaded outer surface, and wherein the ~~female connector portion~~ second locking member has a threaded inner surface.

5. (Currently Amended) The modular stage prop system of claim 1, and further comprising a foot that extends from a[[n]] distal end surface of one of the plurality of first side walls ~~that is opposite the first stepping surface~~.

6. (Original) The modular stage prop system of claim 5, wherein the second stepping surface has a recess formed therein that is adapted to receive the foot for vertically stacking the first stage prop with respect to the second stage prop.

7. (Original) The modular stage prop system of claim 5, wherein the second stepping surface has a plurality of recesses formed therein that are each adapted to receive the foot to maintain the first stage prop in a stacked configuration with respect to the second stage prop.
8. (Original) The modular stage prop system of claim 1, wherein at least one of the plurality of first side surfaces has a handle formed therein.
9. (Currently Amended) The modular stage prop system of claim 1, ~~wherein the male connector portion is formed in one of the first side surfaces, wherein the female connector portion is formed in one of the second side surfaces, and wherein the male connector portion first locking member is attached to the female connector portion second locking member to connect the first stage prop to the second stage prop in a horizontal relationship.~~
10. (Currently Amended) The modular stage prop system of claim 1, ~~wherein the male connector portion is formed in one of the first side surfaces, wherein the female connector portion the second locking member is formed in the second stepping surface, and wherein the male connector portion first locking member is attached to the female connector portion second locking member to connect the first stage prop to the second stage prop in a perpendicular relationship.~~

11. (Original) The modular stage prop system of claim 1, wherein the plurality of first side surfaces has a first height, wherein the plurality of second side surfaces has a second height, and wherein the first height is different than the second height.

12. (Withdrawn) A method of using a modular stage prop system comprising:

providing a first stage prop that comprises a first stepping surface and a plurality of first side surfaces extending from the first stepping surface, wherein the first stepping surface and the plurality of first side surfaces define a first partial enclosure in which an object may be stored, and wherein at least one of the first stepping surface and the plurality of first side surfaces has a male connector portion;

providing a second stage prop that comprises a second stepping surface and a plurality of second side surfaces extending from the second stepping surface, wherein the second stepping surface and the plurality of second side surfaces define a second partial enclosure in which an object may be stored, and wherein at least one of the second stepping surface and the plurality of second side surfaces has a female connector portion;

positioning the first stage prop with respect to the second stage prop so that the male connector portion is adjacent the female connector portion;

engaging the female connector portion with the male connector portion to retain the first stage prop in a stationary position with respect to the second stage prop.

13. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 12, and further comprising:
 - disengaging the male connector portion from the female connector portion;
 - orienting the first stage prop so that the first partial enclosure is upwardly directed; and
 - storing at least one object in the first partial enclosure.
14. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 13, and further comprising:
 - orienting the second stage prop so that the second partial enclosure is upwardly directed; and
 - stacking the second stage prop above the first stage prop so that the second stepping surface is adjacent to an end surface of at least one of the first side walls that is opposite the first stepping surface.
15. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 14, and further comprising extending a foot on the end surface into a recess in the second stepping surface to retain the second stage prop in a stationary relationship with respect to the first stage prop.
16. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 12, wherein the male connector portion is movable between an extended position and a retracted position, and wherein the male connector portion is biased to the retracted position.

17. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 16, wherein the first stepping surface and the plurality of first side surfaces each have an inner wall and an outer wall that are oriented in a spaced-apart configuration, and wherein the male connector portion is biased substantially between the inner wall and the outer wall when the male connector portion is in the retracted position.
18. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 12, wherein the male connector portion has a threaded outer surface, and wherein the female connector portion has a threaded inner surface.
19. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 12, and further comprising forming a handle in at least one of the plurality of first side surfaces.
20. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 12, wherein the male connector portion is formed in one of the first side surfaces, wherein the female connector portion is formed in one of the second side surfaces, and wherein the male connector portion is attached to the female connector portion to connect the first stage prop to the second stage prop in a horizontal relationship.
21. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 12, wherein the male connector portion is formed in one of the first side surfaces, wherein the female connector portion is formed in the second stepping surface, and wherein the male connector portion is attached to the female connector portion to connect the first stage prop to the second stage prop in a perpendicular relationship.

22. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 12, wherein the plurality of first side surfaces has a first height, wherein the plurality of second side surfaces has a second height, and wherein the first height is different than the second height.

Please add new claims 23-24.

23. (New) A modular stage prop system comprising: a first stage prop that comprises a first stepping surface and a plurality of first side surfaces extending from the first stepping surface, wherein the first stepping surface and the plurality of first side surfaces define a first partial enclosure in which an object may be stored, and wherein at least one of the first stepping surface and the plurality of first side surfaces has a first locking member; and a second stage prop that comprises a second stepping surface and a plurality of second side surfaces extending from the second stepping surface, wherein the second stepping surface and the plurality of second side surfaces define a second partial enclosure in which an object may be stored, wherein at least one of the second stepping surface and the plurality of second side surfaces has a second locking member, and wherein the first locking member and the second locking member are capable of engaging each other for retaining the first stage prop and the second stage prop in a stationary relationship with respect to each other, and wherein the first locking member is movable between an extended position and a retracted position, and wherein the first locking member is biased to the retracted position.

24. (New) The modular stage prop system of claim 23, wherein the first stepping surface and the plurality of first side surfaces each have an inner wall and an outer wall that are oriented in a

spaced-apart configuration, and wherein the first locking member is biased substantially between the inner wall and the outer wall when the first locking member is in the retracted position.